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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ADDIS ABABA 000325

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#) [KPKO](#) [MI](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: AU SUMMIT: AF ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY CARTER
MEETS MALAWI FOREIGN MINISTER

Classified By: AMBASSADOR DONALD YAMAMOTO. REASONS: 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C/NF) Summary. Malawi Foreign Minister Joyce Banda told Acting Assistant Secretary for Africa Phil Carter on January 31 that Malawi would not accept any attempt by the United States to establish a "parallel election process." Carter assured her that the United States' only goal was to help strengthen the transparency and credibility of the Malawian election process. Carter pressed Banda to hold Zimbabwe President Mugabe and Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) leader Morgan Tsvangirai accountable for their actions. Banda stated that Malawi would support the process, but would not "interfere" in Zimbabwe politics. Banda also noted that Malawi was not ready to contribute any peacekeeping troops to any mission in the near future. End Summary.

Banda: "No Parallel Election Process"

¶2. (C/NF) Banda opened by expressing displeasure with her perception that the U.S. Embassy in Lilongwe had not properly notified her government of their recent activities in support of the upcoming Malawian elections. She said although the initial misunderstanding had been cleared up, she remained adamant that Malawi would not accept a "parallel election process." Carter explained that the United States was not attempting to establish a parallel process, rather the Embassy was looking to help support the transparency and credibility of the election to everyone's benefit by working with civil society groups. He continued that Washington was not looking at creating an election center to challenge the Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC). Banda retorted, "what happens if the MEC tally differs from your count?" She went on to predict that in such an event, "there would be bloodshed," and she wanted to be on record having provided a clear warning.

¶3. (C/NF) Banda queried that if the United States wanted to help the election process, then "why don't you help us build capacity?" She explained that 75 percent of the polling centers in Malawi did not have electricity, and she suggested that Washington could provide solar panels to help with lighting during the ballot counting. Carter said he would take her concerns under consideration, but insisted that parallel vote tabulations are a tool domestic observation groups can use to bolster the credibility of the process at the polls, and does not involve recounting ballots or disputing the polling station results.

Regional Effort on Zimbabwe Needed

¶4. (C/NF) Moving to regional issues, Carter observed that with the recent agreement between Morgan Tsvangirai's Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and President Robert Mugabe's ZANU-PF, a collective regional effort would be needed to hold the parties accountable. He encouraged the Malawian government to be proactive on Zimbabwe. Banda responded that outside interference in Zimbabwe affairs only created more problems. She explained that her position was that Malawi would support the process, but that they would allow Zimbabwe to handle it "as far as possible." She said at least 50 percent of the Zimbabwe people believe their problems are the result of "outside forces torturing them." She hoped that Mugabe and Tsvangirai were mature enough to see that the people have suffered enough. Carter said he shared her hope, but that the leaders must be held accountable for their actions, and that continued monitoring was needed by the international community and the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

Malawi Not Ready to Dispatch Peacekeeping Troops Anywhere

¶5. (C/NF) Banda said President Mutharika had anticipated that Carter would raise the possibility of Malawi contributing peacekeeping troops to the DRC or for other UN missions, and she had instructions to notify Carter that no troops would be forthcoming. Carter reminded Banda that the United States had spent a considerable amount of money to train Malawian troops for peacekeeping operations and he expressed his hope that the Malawi government would take

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advantage of that training to participate in the future.

¶6. (U) Acting Assistant Secretary Carter approved this message.
YAMAMOTO